175 the various families according to their needs. The pastures and forests, however, were kept in the hands of the community.

THE latter part of the thirteenth century was a critical period for these people; the Tatar invasions were over, and the Turkish invasion had not yet begun. Many of the Roumanian peasantry moved out from the mountains and re-established themselves in the foothills of the Carpathians and of the Transylvanian Alps. The pressure from the west was maintained, however, and the Roumanians became organised on a more strictly military basis. Much of the power of the knesi was usurped by the "boyars," a new military aristocracy that arose, whilst the peasants were gradually forced into a serfdom from which they were not emancipated for several centuries. The various kneaseates became united into small states, under the leadership of princes or "voivods," and were welded eventually into the two principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. The success was short lived, however, for by the end of the fourteenth century Wallachia had fallen under the control of the Turks, and Moldavia soon followed.

THE STRUGGLE against the Turkish invaders was long and bitter; the ways through the mountains needed constant vigilance; the necessity for maintaining a united front against a common foe strengthened the communal spirit; and it is not, therefore, surprising that the alien groups in Transylvania should have preserved their individuality to a remarkable degree. This is particularly noticeable in the case of the Saxons, whose settlements to-day are veritable microcosms of Germanic culture (see Plate V).

[101] ALTHOUGH they originally had a common purpose, these two racial groups of Saxons and Szeklers have remained very different in character, for whereas the Saxons are still very largely confined to the settlements which they established in the early Middle Ages, the political, and to some extent the ethnic, boundaries of the Szeklers have been enlarged from time to time until they now encompass a considerable area of Transylvania.

● 144 OF the early history of the Szeklers we know but little. Racially they appear to differ somewhat from the Magyars of the plain, and to approximate more to the Roumanians in

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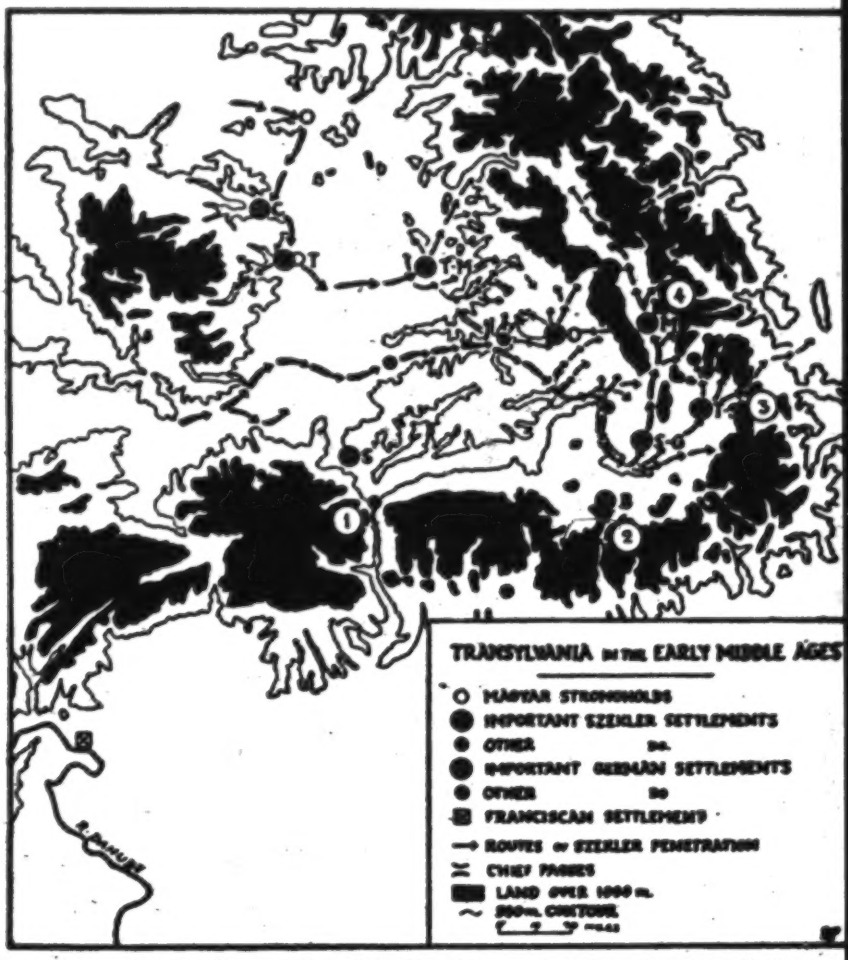


FIGURE 4. B — Braşov, C — Cluj, M — Miercurea Ciucului, O — Odorhei, R — Rodna, S — Sibiu, S-G — Sf. Gheorghe, T — Turda, T-M — Targu-Mureş, T-S — Targu-Secuesc. Passes: (1) Olt, (2) Prahova, (3) Oituz, (4) Ghimeş.

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head form, but whether this is due to the persistence of original characteristics or to partial fusion with the Roumanians it is impossible to say. At all events, they are essentially Magyar in culture, and accompanied the Magyars in their conquest of Hungary in the ninth century.

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FIGURE 4 shows that their penetration of Transylvania followed the valleys of the Mureş and its tributaries, which